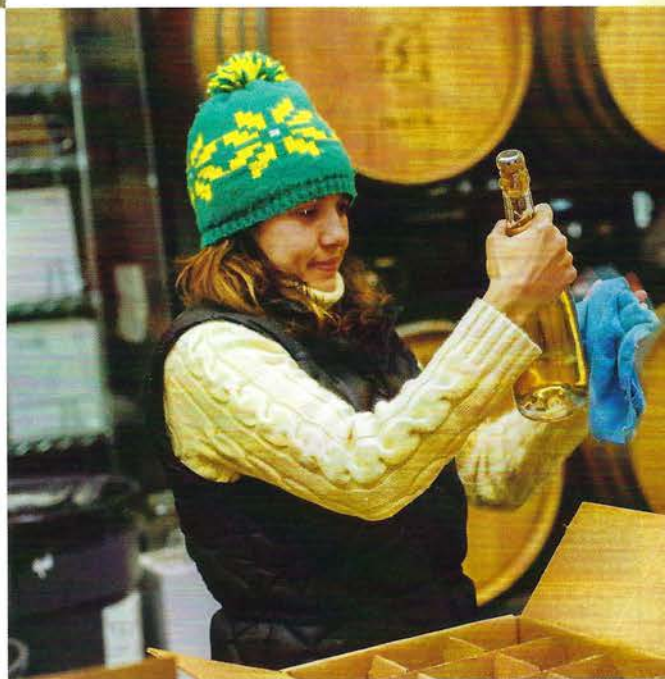




CITY

ROB MCFARLAND SAMPLES OREGON'S FINEST WINES WITHOUT LEAVING THE CITY LIMITS ON A TOUR OF PORTLAND'S URBAN WINERIES.

PICKERS



It's an unusual start to a wine tasting. When I arrive at Teutonic Wine Company in Brooklyn, Portland, owner Barnaby Tuttle pours me a Wineer – a surprisingly delicious combination of muscat and beer. “I don’t like stuffiness,” he explains. “Think of this as a wine dive bar.”

Tuttle is anything but conventional. A former iron-worker who loves punk rock (he used to be in a band called Phlegm Thrower), he started learning about wine when he worked as a buyer for a restaurant group. He fell in love with rieslings from the Mosel Valley in Germany and despite not having any formal training decided to start making his own in 2005 with his wife Olga.

Fourteen years on, Teutonic Wine Company is now Oregon’s leading producer of German-style wines and one of Portland’s expanding collection of urban wineries – producers located within the city limits rather than at a vineyard. Many of them don’t even own any vines – they buy fruit from growers, transport it to the city and make the wine there. It’s particularly handy if you’re visiting on a tight schedule. Rather than having to hire a car and drive to the vineyards, you can taste some of the state’s best drops – and meet the people who made them – all without leaving the city.

Once we’ve dispensed with our Wineers, Tuttle takes me on a whirlwind tour of Teutonic’s numerous varietals.

We start with the Bergspitze, a vibrant, fruity pinot noir which, like most of his wines, comes in a traditional thin Schlegel-style bottle. Next up is the 2013 Alsea pinot, which is made using grapes from Teutonic’s own high-altitude vineyard 35 kilometres from the Pacific Coast. Tuttle is all about making the vines do the work, so the vineyard isn’t irrigated, ploughed or tilled. The cooler climate means the fruit can stay longer on the vine, resulting in wines with more flavour and character.

Tuttle describes his 2014 Seven and Baby pinot noir as “an umami tsunami”. It’s a rich, savoury drop made from grapes harvested in the Chehalem Mountains in Oregon’s Willamette Valley. Next is the 2016 Alsea blanc, a 50/50 blend of pinot blanc and pinot meunier. “Imagine peanut butter and candied cigarette ash,” says Tuttle, as he pours a generous sample. Not the most appealing sounding combination but it’s unexpectedly tasty – a complex fruity wine with a lingering creaminess.

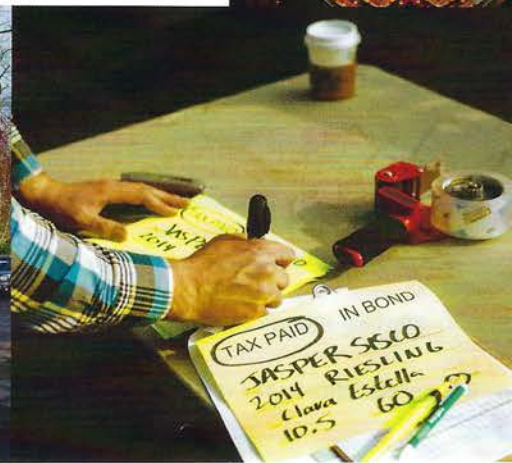
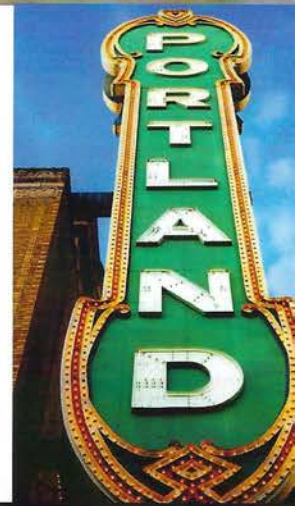
Tuttle prefers being based in the city because it means he can collaborate with other wineries. “There’s so much experimentation and open-mindedness here – it’s a really exciting time.” When I ask him if he feels pressured to make his wines taste the same each year, his reply couldn’t be more emphatic. “F&lk that!! I love that they’re different every year. And I like the fact that not everyone will like every wine – that’s why I make 30 of them.” >>



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: Enjoy a glass of wine outdoors at Southeast Wine Collective; Innovative businesses are bringing the winery experience into the city; Oregon's largest city produces interesting drops like the sparkling Crémant de Portland; It has become a hub for urban wineries; SE Wine Collective is a hive of activity during bottling day; Jasper Sisco is one of the wine collective's alumni, it currently has 11 other winemakers using its facilities.



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CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: Pour a glass; Getting hands on with the grapes; Pull up a stool at the bar; The Southeast Wine Collective was part of the Division-Clinton neighbourhood's transformation into a vibrant precinct; Have a tippie al fresco at the popular Portland fixture.



By moving the winery experience into the city, these producers have not only made it more convenient, they've also made it less pretentious.

DETAILS

GETTING THERE

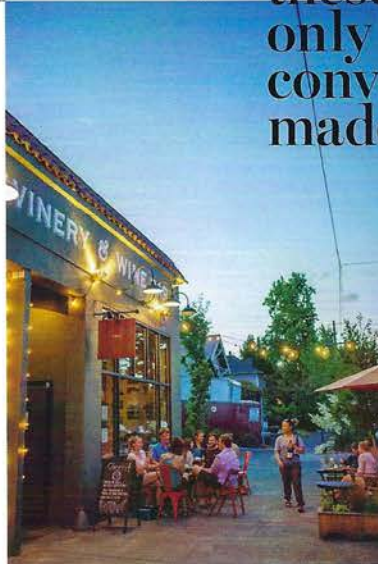
United flies to Portland from Sydney via San Francisco. united.com

DRINKING THERE

For a list of PDX Urban Wineries Association's members, visit pdxurbanwine.com

PLAYING THERE

Check out travelportland.com for more on what to see and where to go when you're in Portland, Oregon.



At the Southeast Wine Collective in the Division-Clinton neighbourhood, co-founders Kate Norris and Tom Monroe have taken the urban winery concept one step further. In addition to making their own wine under the Division Winemaking Company label, they also let 11 other winemakers use the facility.

"It's expensive to make wine," explains Norris. "So what we do is allow a winemaker to get their feet wet while still doing another job."

Since opening in 2012, the site has evolved into a multifaceted production facility and event space. Fronting the complex is an informal wine bar that serves 60-70 wines by the glass together with a menu of seasonal treats miraculously conjured up from a tiny kitchen squeezed between the fermenting tanks.

Norris and Monroe both trained in France so in addition to serving wines from the facility's resident winemakers, they also stock interesting varietals from all over the world. "Our criteria for choosing a wine is simple," says Norris. "Is it yummy and would we drink a bottle of it?"

Thanks largely to the winery, Division-Clinton has transformed from a gritty, low-income neighbourhood into one of the city's most vibrant, sought-after precincts. From the outset, Norris and Monroe wanted to create a winery experience that was different to being at a vineyard. "We like the idea of being close to the community," says Monroe. "This way people can walk to the winery. It's a much more convivial atmosphere."

It's tempting to think urban wineries are a new phenomenon but Portland's oldest facility has been around for 20 years. Hip Chicks Do Wine is the charmingly literal name Laurie Lewis and Renee Neely gave themselves after opening a winery in a converted warehouse in south-east Portland in 1999. Focusing on fruit-forward, easy-drinking wines, the pair inadvertently started a winemaking revolution. Since then the urban wine scene has exploded and there are now more than a dozen establishments scattered throughout the city. Many are members of the PDX Urban Wineries Association, which produces a handy map and guide.

By moving the winery experience into the city, these innovative producers have not only made it more convenient, they've also made it less pretentious. There's a refreshing lack of judgement and snobbery at all the wineries I visit. These are people who love what they do and just want to share it. As Tuttle explains, "You like what you like. Sometimes it's OK to drink sweet wine in the same way it's OK to eat a burger now and again. And remember - cheap wine is still better for you than Coca-Cola. After all, it still contains fruit juice." **IT**